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THE MOOD IN HANOI

May 20, 1972

Reliable observers in Hanoi are reporting considerable unrest in North Vietnam as a result of U.S. air strikes, the mining of North Vietnamese ports and the losses in the offensive in the South:

-- The fact that rail lines north of Hanoi have been cut is widely known to the population. The Paul Doumer Bridge in Hanoi (the main highway and railway link between Hanoi and China) was knocked ^{as} of May 10, with one span severed completely 20 yards from the northwest abutment, and with no repair work in progress.

-- Rice is still available in Hanoi, but produce is not coming in and basic commodities have doubled or tripled. The black market is flourishing despite Government attempts to eliminate it, and there are some reports of executions of black marketeers.

-- Most children have been evacuated from Hanoi to farms, principally in the Red River Delta. Parents must pay for children's upkeep, and peasants are raising prices due to food and other shortages. Some parents unable to pay increased costs are bringing children back to Hanoi against Government directives.

-- The population is disturbed regarding battle losses in the South. Complaints are being heard over these losses, which are reported as higher than the total of the past four years (since Tet 1968). These losses are all the more distressing to the population in that the Government, which still denies that it has any men fighting in the South, never informs next of kin of the loss of their loved ones.